

Change Together

Standing Together's
Theory of Change

נقف מֵעַ
עומדים ביחד

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לשנות ביחד

תיאוריית השינוי של תנועת "עומדים ביחד"

أن نغير معًا
نظريّة التغيير لحراك "نقف معًا"

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עומדים ביחד נقف معًا

www.standing-together.org

Fundamental political and social change in Israel is possible – and we will accomplish it. It is attainable because the majority of people living here hold a genuine interest in an equal and just society, a society that serves all of us, and a government whose policies are radically different from the current regime that only serves occupation and wealth. Israeli society's current structure generates endless social crises. It fails to guarantee prosperity, security, or personal, social, and economic fulfillment for the majority of the population. The status quo hurts many diverse communities. It harms the majority of our society.

The current regime serves the interests of a small group – the capitalist financial elite and the settlement-building political elite – at the expense of the majority’s interests. The current system works for the sake of a minority at the expense of the majority. However, it remains dependent on the majority’s consent. And while the majority complies, it does so with a silence stemming from despair and disbelief in alternatives – not genuine desire. Therefore, Israel’s ruling political structure is far weaker than it appears. We know that through mass organizing and Jewish-Arab cooperation we will generate long-awaited change. We want to replace rule by the elite with rule by the people – a democratic regime that serves the interests of all of us, that serves both the individual and the collective in every aspect of life – rather than the powerful and wealthy elite.

The path towards change requires a new majority – a broad coalition of diverse communities – Jewish and Arab; Mizrachi and Ashkenazi; Women, Men, and all other genders; secular and religious; rural and urban. To build this coalition, we will identify alternative solutions that serve the majority, correct strategic failures that impede mass political mobilization, and cultivate solidarity between diverse groups.

This is the strategy for a People's Left – a Left that expresses the interests of everyone that lives here. A Left that doesn't talk about abstract principles of justice or in the name of others' interests. A joint Jewish-Arab Left that reflects Israel's full diversity. A Left that encourages political involvement among all social classes and fights the elites' monopoly on political activity.

Standing Together isn't satisfied with only symbolic protests or merely damage control for the government's dangerous policies. Rather, we are advancing a comprehensive alternative to the Israeli Right, a complete restructuring of the political map, and the actualization of our movement's vision: socialism, democracy, solidarity, equality, justice, an end to the occupation, peace, and the establishment of a government that works for the good of all those who live here.

To generate this change, we must build a force that grows with every struggle, a force that constantly recruits new supporters, propels them toward action, and attracts ever more attention and support. As a non-partisan political movement, we will pressure the government in the short term but will also build a new majority to transform the political map in the long term.

This is what we will do:

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We will create a politics of hope. We will present an alternative to the status quo and point out the forces that can bring it about. Occupation, war, and rule-by-wealth endure only because the public is convinced that they are unfortunate yet unavoidable necessities. Given this deep-seated feeling, mere criticism isn't nearly enough. **Rather, we must present alternative and practical solutions that serve the interests of all those who live here.** We must produce alternatives that address specific problems while also generating broad political and economic change – a fundamental restructuring of the political map. The solutions that we propose must be concrete and easy to imagine.

We will place these alternatives at the center of the public agenda through the use of diverse tools such as protests, strikes, virtual campaigns, and more. We will choose campaigns that elicit hope, promote solidarity, and give voice to the voiceless. **We will set small goals to achieve small victories.** Such victories will reinforce the feeling that we can enact change. **And finally, the very existence of our unified, political, and forward-looking community will generate hope.**

We don't speak in the name of just one nation, rather we sound the voice of all people who live here – Jewish and Arab alike. This is our society in its full diversity. We speak for it. We speak for the majority. Since the current regime doesn't reflect the majority's interests, we will. The right-wing regime seeks to split the majority and portrays our political reality as an eternal struggle between irreconcilable groups (Jews versus Arabs, Ashkenazi vs. Mizrachi, etc.). Our task is to dismantle this discourse of hatred and replace it with joint struggle and cooperation.

We will isolate the ruling elite rather than allow them to divide us. We will not be satisfied with merely defending minority rights. Rather we will advance solutions that serve the majority's interests – solutions that are contrary only to the interests of a narrow elite that profits from the political and economic status quo. We will show the public how our proposals serve their interests. **We will connect local struggles to a wider story and prove that our solutions serve the collective interest.** Joining local battles to this broader narrative will help us connect diverse groups and demands. **We will speak Hebrew and Arabic** – and any other language that can express solidarity.

Bilingualism is an example of our commitment to Jewish-Arab partnership and articulates our dreams for a more pluralistic society. **With this cooperation, we will unite the fragmented majority.** In addition, we will promote sustained solidarity between diverse communities.

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We will translate leftist ideas into clear language designed to convince and persuade, not incite and divide. Without compromising our values, we will present our goals with widely appealing language. Fundamental change doesn't need to sound extreme. In politics, language determines reality. If certain words make it difficult to recruit allies and advance our solutions, we won't use them. Our mission is to enact change, not merely to be correct. Of course, we will never stop using certain expressions that articulate important power imbalances such as the word "occupation." Rather, we will always prefer practical solutions over elitist language.

Our movement's members hold diverse identities. As a mass movement, we will create a space for all of them. At the same time, we will remember that certain

rhetoric, flags, and symbols hold different meanings for different groups and can thus exclude potential partners who otherwise agree with our political values. Therefore, we will act cautiously, respectfully, and inclusively when using political symbolism.

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We will work to undermine the “politically obvious.” When political factions appear rigidly defined, every player’s position predetermined, and alliances foreordained – it becomes difficult to generate change. The current political map, where political affiliation is often dictated by ethnic, class, religious, or geographic identity, only serves the existing socio-political order. It allows the Right to claim that it represents “the people,” while actually acting against them. Therefore, our task is to challenge the existing political framework and disrupt its underlying algorithm.

In order to generate real change, we will form surprising alliances, connect disparate struggles, and build a political language that leverages reality to our advantage. We will preference struggles that undermine the “obvious,” that build a new political

identity bridging diverse social identities, and that generate new coalitions. We will prefer these struggles over others (while they may be worthy) that merely reproduce existing political structures.

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We must be as diverse as the society that we intend to transform. Therefore, we will strive to ensure that our movement and its leadership reflect Israel's diversity in terms of nationality, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, immigration status, geography, religion, religiosity, gender, and sexual orientation. We will ensure that our movement represents all communities besides the economic and political elite. Importantly, we will allocate extra representation to especially marginalized groups. This principle will guide the movement's growth: **Movement spaces will give extra weight to the geographic periphery, low-income neighborhoods, and other marginalized communities.** This consideration will also determine our campaigns' main priorities.

We will be a movement that belongs to all its members.

Our work will be shaped by local chapters throughout the country. As they actualize the movement's vision, these chapters will enjoy autonomy and support from the national leadership. Movement membership will always remain open to all. We aim to form a movement that will serve as a **political home** to all those seeking change and as a framework for the political transformations that our members strive for.

We will consistently build our movement, grow our membership, and establish new chapters across the country.

As more members join, our strength will grow, and we will increase our capacity to enact broad social and political change. As the movement becomes active in more localities, it will grow more diverse and broaden a base of cooperation for additional struggles.

In order to build power, the movement will build an infrastructure for organizing people, provide activists with tools for more influential and effective work, and deliver trainings based on the cumulative experience of struggles from Israel and around the world. This

theory of change and its accompanying trainings **will equip the movement's members with the knowledge and theory they need to develop and win campaigns.**

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We will ensure that the movement's internal culture reflects the politics that we want to promote. We will insist on an organic, democratic, participatory, transparent, and inclusive culture – one where people from diverse backgrounds will feel at home. An environment that gives every member appropriate opportunities for involvement based on their desire, age, class, and ability. Importantly, we will be careful not to exclude those who may not be proficient in the movement's political vocabulary.

Within our movement, we will promote cultural and communal activities that build solidarity between diverse groups in both daily life and in our political struggles. We will protect our ideological pluralism: we will remember that we are united by political demands and political strategies – not abstract ideological concepts. Therefore, while we will cooperate with various political parties, **we will never identify with a specific party.**

We will insist on taking on an active role in the struggle against the occupation and for peace. We will fight to end Israel's rule over the Palestinian people – knowing that this is the only way to achieve real security for all those who live here. To win this decades-long struggle, we will strive to create innovative strategies that will appeal to new audiences and recruit additional support.

We will strategically structure our priorities. There are many worthy struggles, but when deciding whether to join an existing fight or to start a new campaign, we will strategically prioritize:

- **Urgent struggles** where our involvement can tip the scales and positively influence human life.
- **Struggles that will reorganize the political field**, disrupt traditional affiliations, break apart long-standing political alliances, and express our leftist values in surprising ways. In particular, we will prioritize campaigns connected to issues affecting disadvantaged communities.

- **Struggles where our involvement will reframe them as part of a broader political process. Such interventions will also help create new alliances.**
- **Struggles that are non-polarizing and which the regime has yet to clearly “mark” on the left-right spectrum.** Struggles over issues such as the environment, public health, affordable housing, misogynistic violence, and public transportation will connect us with sectors of the population who don't explicitly identify as leftists.

For every struggle that we partake in, we will set achievable goals, as part of our understanding that small victories can significantly grow energy and hope. We will always remember **that change is caused by being proactive** not reactive.

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We will partner with, express solidarity with, and support those struggles that are happening around us. However, we will always be careful not to dominate, appropriate or exploit. We know that the campaigns against the financial and political elite's

dangerous policies must be led by those who are most harmed by them. Their lives are most directly and severely impacted by the results of these struggles. We will recruit movement members around local agendas. We will engage in dialogue with affiliated groups outside of “Standing Together” who share at least some of our goals. Concurrently, we will also work to bring these groups closer to our movement.

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We will **encourage broad democratic involvement** from those who currently sit on the sidelines and involve as many communities as possible in political action. We will ignite a sense of urgency to pursue political action for the common good. We will consistently mobilize among communities who have given up on political action. We will support long root grassroots struggles and community organizing (and not just those in the spotlight). Through all of these fights, we will encourage political mobilization.

As a general rule, we will refrain from techniques that reduce political activity to the realm of experts alone, such as lawsuits or investigative reports. **We will fight the liberal attempt to reduce the political sphere to expert discussions over law or economics.** Rather, we will use a wide toolbox to enable people from diverse backgrounds to

contribute according to their abilities. **We will advance an anti-elitist agenda**, that will challenge the concentration of economic, political, and cultural power in the hands of a small minority.

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We will take advantage of opportunities. We will not rush to criticize small nuances in others' political arguments. As long as their claims do not directly contradict our movement's values and are directed toward problems that we too want to solve, we will first express solidarity, offer assistance, and try to synthesize issue-specific criticisms into broad critiques of the status quo. We will take an inclusive approach – willing to join struggles at the top of the public agenda that align with our movement's spirit, without ever giving up on our core values.

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We see all people as potential partners. Ordinary people who hold right-wing positions are not our adversaries. Rather, they are people whom we can persuade by suggesting solutions that express common sense and shared interests. Therefore, we see everyone

as possible partners and even potential movement members. We will be grateful for every step they take toward our positions and never dictate moral purity tests. We will invite them to build a new political identity with us, based on our values and political interests. **We will not give up on the unconvinced.** Alongside demonstrations (which express strength but are also liable to increase polarization), we will invest in grassroots work and consistent communication in order to appeal to the unconvinced.

We will avoid a moralistic position that presents us as just while others as immoral. A position that labels entire communities as fascists or racists. People who don't yet agree with our positions aren't necessarily evil. We know that they deserve basic respect. Instead of high-minded discussions of polarizing ideological principles or arrogant moralizing, we will explore how our solutions can also serve those who don't agree with us. Emphasizing solutions that serve the general good will build bridges and broaden our support. Therefore, we will refrain from using human rights rhetoric and instead translate ideological questions into comprehensible proposals that address real needs such as housing, education, and fair income.

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We will cooperate with groups, organizations, and movements who share our goals even if they don't share our complete worldview or if their motivations don't completely align with ours.

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We will advance change by building a community of solidarity, life, and learning. The movement and its chapters are an inclusive, educational, and growing social fabric. This is a movement where we will learn from the past and develop leadership. It is also a social-cultural movement aimed at bringing together family and friends. We don't only engage in direct political activity but are also building the more diverse and empathetic society that we dream of. We will always ensure that the movement's essence doesn't come at the expense of inclusivity and heterogeneity but rather builds community amidst diversity.

The strategy proposed in this document is new and has not yet been tried by the Israeli left: we do not speak in the name of philosophical, legal, or academic principles. These principles are perceived as elitist as they function without consideration of the reality that most people live in. We are also not distancing ourselves in a seemingly radical discourse that deliberately chooses to alienate itself from the majority. Instead, we will insist on speaking with all of Israeli society, trying to influence it, and striving to represent it and express its' interests.

The existing order is based on three defining factors: on the division of the majority, on passivity and indifference, and on the belief that there is no alternative. Our activism is centered on addressing three measures: connecting people from different communities despite the differences between them, driving people from indifference to activity, and offering a hopeful alternative.

The task that “Standing Together” has chosen to tackle is a revolutionary one: We strive to create profound change within Israeli society, the Israeli economy, and Israeli politics. This is not a simple task, but we are inspired by our faith in people: their open minds, their genuine intentions, and their hearts filled with compassion and empathy. We love the people who live here. We are a part of them and we insist on fighting with and for them. Through joint solidarity and struggle, we will succeed.

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